

WHO/Europe Launches Mpox Toolkit Developed with Leadership from Kristiania Research Centre

OSLO, Norway – February 5, 2026 – The WHO/Europe Risk Communication, Community Engagement and Infodemic Management (RCCE-IM) Collaboration Centre at Kristiania University of Applied Sciences has played a leading role in the development of a new Mpox Response Research Toolkit. The toolkit was officially launched today by the WHO Regional Office for Europe, demonstrating how applied research at Kristiania is delivering practical impact for public health practitioners across Europe and beyond.

The toolkit, created through partnership between the WHO/Europe Community Resilience and Protection Unit and the WHO/Europe Collaborating Centre for RCCE-IM at Kristiania—led by Professor Audra Diers-Lawson—provides evidence-based, practitioner-ready guidance to strengthen communication, community engagement, and preparedness before and during health emergencies. The European launch event brought together more than 90 participants from public health authorities, ministries, nongovernmental organizations, international agencies, and civil society.

Cristiana Salvi, WHO/Europe Regional Adviser for the Community Resilience and Protection Unit, emphasized that the toolkit reflects the critical importance of grounding outbreak response in community knowledge, cultural sensitivity, and sustained trust. She highlighted that co-creation with affected populations and continuous engagement are essential to improving preparedness, vaccination outreach, and effective public health communication as mpox cases continue to present challenges in parts of the region.

Professor Audra Diers-Lawson, professor of risk and crisis communication at Kristiania University of Applied Sciences and head of the RCCE-IM Collaborating Centre, delivered the keynote address for the launch event. Diers-Lawson underscored the applied purpose of the research behind the toolkit. “Effective risk communication starts with understanding why people would act, not just what they should do,” she said, explaining that the work prioritizes message acceptance, ethical engagement, and proactive infodemic management so practitioners can respond more quickly and credibly in real-world crises.

The modular toolkit enables practitioners to identify trust dynamics, values, and information needs within communities while supporting anonymous, stigma-sensitive participation. It operationalizes the IDEA risk communication framework—Internalization, Distribution, Explanation, and Action—allowing clearer messaging, earlier misinformation prevention, and stronger community resilience across outbreak contexts.

Public health leaders participating in the launch shared lessons from the initial mpox response, including the need to rebuild trust through collaboration with community organizations, avoid stigmatizing language, and integrate targeted outreach into broader health communication. National experiences in Spain and Germany illustrated how trusted

messengers, accessible information channels, and early engagement can improve vaccination uptake and reduce misinformation risks.

For Kristiania University of Applied Sciences, the WHO/Europe launch represents a clear example of how applied research conducted within the university's RCCE-IM Collaborating Centre can shape policy and practice at European and international levels. By leading the research and development behind an official WHO/Europe tool, the centre demonstrates Kristiania's mission to ensure research contributes directly to society through practical solutions, capacity building, and global collaboration.

Designed to be transferable beyond mpox, the toolkit provides a reusable preparedness resource for future infectious disease threats. Its focus on stable behavioral drivers—such as trust in institutions, perceived efficacy of actions, and community values—supports faster activation, more credible communication, and sustained engagement with communities during health crises.

The toolkit is publicly available at: <https://iris.who.int/items/b3b2e5a8-bdfc-4ddb-9fe0-cc871b745039>

About Kristiania University of Applied Sciences

Kristiania University of Applied Sciences is a leading Norwegian institution committed to applied, practice-oriented education and research. Through international partnerships and practitioner-focused innovation, Kristiania develops knowledge and tools that address real societal challenges and strengthen public sector resilience.

About the WHO/Europe Collaborating Centre for RCCE-IM

Established in 2025 at Kristiania's School of Communication, Leadership, and Marketing, the WHO/Europe Collaborating Centre for Risk Communication, Community Engagement, and Infodemic Management conducts research, builds capacity, and supports international knowledge exchange to improve trust, counter misinformation, and enhance health emergency preparedness and response across the European Region.

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